

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

21 June 1987

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Finland

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

... The outstanding success of the peace conference in Finlandia Hall which your community sponsored last autumn remains one of the highlights among the various Bahá'í peace events held throughout the world since the issuance of *The Promise of World Peace*. The House of Justice is happy to know of your continuing effort to keep the subject of world peace before the Finnish people; however, it advises you to be careful in choosing what such follow-up efforts should be and offers the following comments on your specific question about promoting the idea of a world conference of government leaders.

It is not advisable for Bahá'í institutions or individuals to initiate actions designed to prod government leaders to urge their governments or the leaders of other governments to convene the world conference called for by Bahá'u'lláh and echoed in *The Promise of World Peace*. Two points should be borne in mind in this regard: (1) Because of the political gravity of the decisions implied by this call and the differing political attitudes which it evokes, such actions on the part of the Bahá'í community would embroil the friends in partisan politics. There is quite a difference between identifying, as does the Peace Statement, the need for a convocation of world leaders and initiating the political processes towards its realization. (2) In the writings of the Faith (e.g., the closing passages of *The Promised Day Is Come*), it is clear that the establishment of the Lesser Peace, of which the conference of leaders will be a related event, will come about independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or action.

The following reply was written on behalf of the beloved Guardian in a letter dated 14 March 1939 to an individual believer:

Your view that the Lesser Peace will come about through the political efforts of the states and nations of the world, and independently of any direct Bahá'í plan or effort, and the Most Great Peace established through the instrumentality of the believers, and by the direct operation of the laws and principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the functioning of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme organ of the Bahá'í Super State—your view on this subject is quite correct and in full accord with the pronouncements of the Guardian as embodied in the “Unfoldment of World Civilization.”

It is clear, then, that the friends must respect the prerogatives of political leaders in this matter and allow them the latitude to exercise the initiative that only they can effectively take towards the establishment of the Lesser Peace. The fact that Bahá'í institutions will not be directly involved in the eventual convocation of the world leaders and in effecting the political unity of nations does not mean that the Bahá'ís are standing aside and waiting for the Lesser Peace to come before they do something about the peace of humanity. Indeed, by promoting the principles of the Faith, which are indispensable to the maintenance of peace, by living the Teachings, and by fashioning the instruments of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which we are told by the beloved Guardian is the pattern for future society, the Bahá'ís are constantly engaged in laying the foundation for world peace, the Most Great Peace being their ultimate goal. The Bahá'ís should do whatever they can within the context of their Bahá'í teaching and consolidation plans and also through their professional and other regular activities to promulgate universal peace.

It is a source of great satisfaction to the House of Justice to see with what intensity the peace initiative of the Bahá'í community is being pursued by the friends, who must now accelerate their activities at the grassroots level. The grassroots effort of the Bahá'ís should prepare the ground for the transition from the present system of national sovereignty to a system of world government. This it can do by concentrating on wide and continual dissemination of the Peace Statement whose contents should be known by the generality of humanity, on engaging people from all walks of life in discussions on peace, and on instilling and encouraging a sense of personal commitment to the prerequisites of peace. In a word, what is needed now is a worldwide consciousness of not only the requirements but also the possibility and inevitability of peace. Therefore, our immediate and inescapable task as Bahá'ís is to imbue the populations with such hope.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat